Alger's New York

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price of the violin with which the young Italian replaced the one stolen by Tim Rafferty.

Bleecker Street was the realm of inexpensive though eminently respectable boarding houses. Many of Alger's heroes moved there from the Five Points neighborhood when fortune had taken them under her wing.

"The time had been when Bleecker Street was fashionable and lined with dwellings of substantial and prosperous citizens," runs the description in "Slow and Sure." "That time had gone by. Still, it was several grades above the streets in the lower part of the city."

It was in Bleecker Street that Paul Hoffman and his mother sought lodgings after their Pearl Street tenement was burned, and here Dick and his friend Henry Fosdick moved as soon as their salaries as office boys permitted a change from Mrs. Mooney's boarding house in "the far from fashionable" Mott Stret.

Bleecker Street Immortalized by Jones the Grocer

In Bleecker Street, too, at number 163, lived Mrs. John Jones, whose husband, as described by Mrs. Jones's mother to Ben the Luggage Boy, while he acted as guide to her daughter's home, "is a nice man, though his head is bald on top, and he keeps a grocery store."

Nowhere does Alger describe a quarter resembling the East Side ghetto of the present time. Indeed, although he mentions practically every other nationality, not a single Russian Jew appears in any of his stories.

Corresponding to the modern congested tenement districts were Baxter Street, "miserable lodgings in Worth Street, in the precincts of Five Points, very near where the Five Points House of Industry now stands," and Rector Street back of Trinity Church.

Baxter Street Alger calls "one of the most wretched spots in the city, lined with miserable tenement houses, policy shops, and second-hand stores. Whoever passes through it in the evening," he warns, "will do well to look to the safety of his pocketbook and watch, if he is imprudent enough to carry either in a district where the Ten Commandments are unknown, or unregarded."

Trinity Church Had Some Unsavory Neighbors

Rector Street, along which Ben the Luggage Boy used to pass when seeking a night's lodging among the cotton bales on the wharves, "notwithstanding its clerical name, is far from an attractive street," Alger declares. "Just in the rear of the great church and extending down to the wharves is a collection of miserable dwellings, occupied by tenants upon whom the near presence of the sanctuary appears to produce little impression of a salutary character."

The Bowery, not yet sung as the haunt of the sweatered "tough guy," is spoken of as "a broad avenue, wider than Broadway, and lined with shops of great variety, but of a grade inferior to those of its more aristocratic neighbor." At its head, then as now, stood Cooper Institute, opposite which was the Bible House, "a very large building, covering an acre of ground." In the same neighborhood was Steinway Hall, where on a Sunday night Ben the Luggage Boy attended a sacred concert with his new found sister.

Broadway was a source of unceasing inspiration to Alger. From the Battery up to Madison Square, or Madison Park, as he sometimes calls it, his boys travel time and again.

At 365 Broadway Was a "Very Elegant" Ice-Creamery

"There was novelty in the evening aspect of Broadway, with its shops and theatres glittering with light," he writes in describing the section near Bleecker Street, in the neighborhood of the Metropolitan and St. Nicholas hotels. Along this street were the city's best known shops: "Tiffany, whose fame as a jeweller is worldwide, had not yet removed to his present magnificent store on Union Square"; Ball & Black, who maintained a "handsome jewelry store" a short distance below Amity Street, and A. T. Stewart's, "the large white marble building at the corner of Chambers Street, the largest store on Broadway," where Paul Hoffman purchased many a dress pattern for his mother.

At 365 Broadway, on the corner of Franklin Street, was Taylor's Saloon, in the building later occupied by the Merchant's Union Express Company. This ice-cream parlor was said to be "very elegant," and attracted Ragged Dick and Frank Whitney on their tour of the city. Entering, "they found themselves in a very spacious and elegant saloon, resplendent with gilding, and adorned on all sides with costly mirrors. They sat down at a small table with a marble top, and Frank gave the order."

Necktie and Other Stands on Lower Broadway

Just below Franklin Street stood the New York Hospital, "a structure several rods back from the street, with a large yard in front. It was an unusual sight for Broadway, all the other buildings in that neighborhood being even with the street."

Even in Alger's day traffic on Broadway near City Hall Park was congested. Crossing the street at this point is "easier proposed than done," he declares. "There is always such a throng of omnibuses, drays, carriages and vehicles of all kinds in the neighborhood of the Astor House that the crossing is formidable to one who is not used to it."

Ben the Luggage Boy passed Paul the Peddler's necktie stand on his first walk to the Battery, although he did not make Paul's acquaintance at the time. As he went down Broadway "his attention was soon drawn to the street merchants doing business on the sidewalk. Here was a vender of neckties, displaying a varied assortment of different colors, for 'only twenty-five cents each.' Next came a candy merchant, with his stock in trade, divided up into irregular lumps, and labelled a penny apiece. Next came a man with an assortment of knives, all of them open, and sticking into a large board, the only shop required by the proprietor."

Sixth Avenue, "A Respectable Street for a Good Sized City"

The Battery failed to impress Ben any more than Central Park did Ragged Dick. "Here was Castle Garden, a large structure, now used for recently arrived immigrants, but once the scene of Jenny Lind's triumphs. Now it would seem very strange to have a grand concert in such a locality. However, Ben knew nothing of the purposes of the building, and looked at it ignorantly. The Battery he thought might once have been pretty, but now the grass has been worn off by pedestrians, and the once fashionable houses in the neighborhood have long ago been deserted by their original proprietors, and turned into warehouses or cheap boarding houses."

It took Frank Whitney and Ragged Dick three-quarters of an hour in a horsecar to reach Central Park from the Astor House, and they were ready to return as soon as they had reached Fifty-ninth Street.

"It had not been long since work commenced upon it, and it was still very rough and unfinished," Alger writes of the park in 1868, some years after their visit to it. "A rough tract of land, two miles and a half from north to south and half a mile broad, very rocky in parts, was the material from which the Park Commissioners have made the present beautiful inclosure. There were no houses of good appearance near it, buildings being limited mainly to rude temporary huts used by workmen who were employed in improving it. The time will undoubtedly come when the park will be surrounded by elegant residences, and compare favorably in this respect with the most attractive parts of any city in the world."

SITE OF LOVEJOY'S HOTEL, PARK ROW

Where Paul the Peddler, Had the Adventure with Mr. Felix Montgomery and the $300 Diamond Ring

Returning from the park the boys took the Sixth Avenue cars. "Sixth Avenue," Alger says, "is lined with stores, many of them of very good appearance, and would make a respectable street for a good sized city."

For amusement Alger's boys loved above all to go to the Old Bowery or Tony Pastor's. Here Ben, Dick, Mark or Rough and Ready often finished up the day and "from his seat in the pit indulged in independent criticism of the acting, as he leaned back in his seat and munched peanuts, throwing the shells about carelessly."

Barnum's Museum, "a great building with a lot of flags," was also very popular. Here Paul took his mother and his brother Jimmy to see Tom Thumb. The play that day happened to be "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which Alger naively surmises most of his readers have seen.

Niblo's Garden, the New York Circus and Wallack's, where a gallery seat cost thirty cents and London successes were often performed, were places occasionally visited by the boys.

The Old Park Row That Ragged Dick Knew

Although the Astor House was the centre of Alger's little world, other hotels in the neighborhood of the City Hall stand out prominently in his stories. The heater in French's Hotel, at the corner of Chatham and Frankfort Streets, across from old Tammany Hall and the "Tribune establishment," offered warmth to many a freezing lad on winter nights.

At 34 Park Row stood Lovejoy's Hotel, a favorite hostlery for transients. In the "refectory, attached to Lovejoy's," Ragged Dick frequently ate when he had had a prosperous day, and in Room 237, on one of its upper floors, Paul the Peddler was chloroformed by Mister Felix Montgomery, who, posing as a jeweller from Syracuse, stole the $300 diamond ring the lad's mother had found in Central Park.

Alger also speaks of the more aristocratic St. Nicholas and Metropolitan Hotels, with their "imposing fronts, the former of white marble, the latter of subdued brown hue, but none the less elegant in its internal appointments." Generally he adds, that "each of these splendid structures cost with furnishing not far from a million dollars."

The Fifth Avenue Hotel Put a Palace to Shame

In his descriptions of the Fifth Avenue Hotel Alger reflects the pride which the city at large took in the building. "At the junction of Fifth Avenue and Broadway, facing a beautiful park of two acres," it stood, "a large marble building presenting a fine appearance with its extensive white front. One of the Queen's Palaces," he boasts, "is far from being as fine a looking building as the Fifth Avenue Hotel. St. James Palace is a very ugly looking brick structure and appears much more like a factory than the home of royalty. There are few hotels in the world as fine as this democratic institution."

Although Alger's street boys seldom found their way to church alone, their benefactors often took them to services. It was through his friend Mr. Greyson that Ragged Dick attended church at Twenty-first Street and Fifth Avenue, and in a church not far from Union Square Paul Hoffman encountered his self-appointed guardian, Mr. Preston.

Fulton Market, South Ferry, Cortlandt Street Ferry, where the youthful "baggage smashers" waited for the trains from Philadelphia, and the piers of the Stonington and Norwich boat lines were all familiar to the Alger family.

"Phil the Fiddler" Did Some Practical Good

Behind all of Alger's writing he held to the purpose of interesting the public in the friendless boys of the city. It is said that "Phil the Fiddler" resulted in breaking up the padrone system, by which Italian boys were leased by their parents to cruel masters, to whom they were forced to give their small earnings. In all of his stories he pays tribute to the Newsboys' Lodging House and to Charles O'Connor, its superintendent.

"The downtown Newsboys' Lodging House," he writes in "Mark the Match Boy," "was located at the corner of Fulton and Nassau Streets. It occupied the fifth and sixth stories of the building then known as the Sun Building, owned by Moses S. Beach, publisher of that journal."

Alger died in 1899. His life had been an active one, yet he had always found time to be interested in his immediate surroundings. When other writers turned to the then recent Civil War for material, Alger described the daily life of his city. Chronicles of national reconstruction are many. Horatio Alger, jr., has left us one of the few accurate pictures of a great city in the making.

Kid Comparatives

FIRST Little Boy *(defiantly)*—Well, I go to the Modern School.

Second Little Boy: You needn't make such a fuss about it. Think you're a lot, don't you, because they had a picture of your bookkeeping class in last Sunday's paper. I go to a real educational institution. Yours isn't a school; old Abraham Flexner himself admits it's only an experiment. When you go to the Raleigh Classical Academy, you're going to an A1 hall of learning. It's a peach of a place. Puts it all over yours. Just yesterday we were reading the fourth paragraph of the second book of Cæsar's Gallic War. That guy certainly could use a subjunctive with felicity and precision. He's a whiz!

First Little Boy *(with a tinge of jealousy)*: You may be having a lot of fun, but let me tell you it's sheer waste of time. Last night father was reading from the report of the Rockefeller Foundation, and it's heartbreaking to see how a school like yours can ruin a kid's career. You won't know a thing about life when *you* get out into the world. My father says so, and he knows. He went to your school. Says he'll never do it over again. What we need, Freddie, is preparation for life; we've got to learn to grapple with modern problems. My father wouldn't do a thing to me if I wasted my time fooling around a subjunctive. Oh, no! Just you wait. Twenty years from now I'll be sitting at the head of a soap packing concern, tingling with modernity, and where'll you be, you poor second hand edition of a Latin dictionary? Home reading the third book of Cæsar, I suppose."

Second Little Boy: That's the trouble with your crowd over at the Modern School. Never think of anything but your future. Don't give a darn for the higher life. My Latin teacher says your bookkeeping teacher hasn't any reverence for the past. And my cousin told me you once cut a class in Greek history to learn touch typewriting. A fine crowd, you are. First thing you know we'll cut you out of our basketball schedule. We've got to draw the line somewhere.

First Little Boy: Cut the irrelevant chatter, Aristophanes, and get a little realism in that dome shaped classical dictionary of yours. Over at our school we know something about life. I go home every day rooting for realities. My mother says she never saw such a change in a boy. It's wonderful what that class in clay modelling has done for me. I'm just beginning to appreciate modern civilization. And if my father didn't hear Mr. Flexner at a lecture one night I might be in your Latin class.

Second Little Boy: Do you really have a good time over there?"

First Little Boy: A good time! We've got individual clay modelling sets and typewriters with black and red ribbons. And one adding machine for every three boys. It's lots of fun. And gee whiz! it certainly does make one cognizant of the stern realities of the world. When you're through you're all ready to take your little place in modern civilization. Imagine! And we don't even have to take elementary algebra, if we're going to be literary men or something like that.

Second Little Boy: Well, anyhow, we've got stereopticon views of the Parthenon and the Capitoline Hill. It'd be nice to have a typewriter, I guess; there's only one in our school, in the principal's office. It's invisible, and it hasn't got a back spacer. But there's a beautiful statue of Hermes on his desk, in bronze and everything. When you walk through our school you feel as if you were back in Greece, or Sanskrit, or somewhere. The Greeks were a beautiful people; they always won the Olympic Games, and they certainly had some vocabulary.

First Little Boy: Well, you come over some day if you want to learn what life really is. And I'll let you practise on my typewriter. When I come over you can lend me your Greek grammar. WHEN!

ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By Alice Duer Miller

THE NEW CLASSICS

["Let the speaker read the second, fifth and seventh chapters of the Book of Proverbs, the classic stories of Circe and the Sirens, and Milton's 'Samson Agonistes,' and he will realize how futile and deceptive is the pretence that giving the vote to women will prevent sexual crime."—E. P. Wheeler, "The Case Against Woman Suffrage."]

Circe was extremely naughty,
But she had a certain charm,
And the gods, so cold and haughty,
Viewed her conduct with alarm;
For she lived remote, not lonely,
On an isle of asphodel,
Where the dews, the moisture only,
On the clustered violets fell.

All the guests whom she invited,
All who anchored in the bay,
Always went away delighted—
If, that is, they went away.
And the rumors of her beauty
Reached the gods, as such things should,
And they thought it was their duty
To reform her if they could.

So they had a booth erected,
In the pure Ionic style,
Carved and grooved; and when perfected,
They dispatched it to the isle.
Yes, these wise Olympus-Dwellers
Sent it to that isle remote,
With election-boards and tellers,
And they told that witch to vote.

They had heard that wheresoever
Woman casts an oyster-shell
All her charms dissolve, and never
After can she cast a spell.
Therefore, tempering their mercy
With a sternness wise and just,
They explained to naughty Circe
She might vote—in fact, she must.

But their reasonable action
Did not prosper in this case,
Did not alter her attraction,
Did not make her plain of face,
Of her charms it did not heal her,
Did not drive her spells away;
And it seems that Mr. Wheeler
Finds things much the same to-day.

Here, too, we may find the explanation as to why the Governor has restored Mr. Joe Cassidy of Queens to full citizenship: So as to decrease his indirect influence.

Women are not allowed to practise law in England. The English Council of the Bar has selected the present moment to defeat overwhelmingly a resolution to consider the admission of duly qualified women to the legal profession.

Their place is in the munition factory, on the farm and in the hospital. They must leave the more sheltered professions to Man.

The suffragists of Massachusetts, according to "The Woman's Journal," have discovered that the bill providing for a constitutional convention says that the results must be submitted, not to the voters, but to the "people" of the state.

With an almost insane egotism, they seem to be under the impression that this word may mean them.

We are willing to state for their information that some time ago the English common law settled this point for good; it said that "A woman is not a person in matters of rights and privileges, but she is a person in matters of pains and penalties."

The only question that remains is: Is it a privilege or a pain to be obliged to live under a constitution that you had no voice in accepting?

Don't you know the answer?

It is pain for a man and a privilege for a woman.

Why is it a privilege for a woman to live under a constitution she did not accept?

Because either she likes it, in which case she has received something she likes without any effort; or she hates it, in which case she has an opportunity of silent, unselfish suffering.

And that is what a true woman likes better than anything else—at least, so a good many men have told us.